

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

About

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CHSS 270 B2

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Mission

Sociology is a discipline concerned with equality, justice, and social responsibility within society's cultural, political, and economic systems. The mission of the Sociology Department at Sam Houston State University is to cultivate sociological mindfulness, which involves understanding how social forces and cultural contexts shape people's experiences, how personal troubles are connected to broader social issues, and how social arrangements create both constraints and opportunities for individuals and groups. Sociological mindfulness promotes critical and analytical thinking and equips students with the theoretical, methodological, and communication skills to work with others to solve problems and improve social conditions in local communities and the broader society.

Programs

The Sociology Department at Sam Houston State University offers unique master's and certificate programs designed to meet the needs of active students and professionals. Both the Master of Arts in Sociology and Graduate Certificate in Sociology are entirely *online* programs designed to provide students with advanced instruction in quantitative and qualitative techniques of sociological research, theory, and leading topical areas in sociology. In both programs, students develop the professional skills necessary to analyze social issues in applied settings and advance their careers.

Curriculum

The graduate programs in Sociology are designed to provide students with advanced instruction in methodological techniques, theoretical perspectives, and empirical evidence in substantive areas that guide sociological inquiry. Given our faculty's varying research agendas, our program emphasizes Public Sociology. Upon completing our program, students cultivate skills that bring sociology to the public sphere through foci such as grant writing, program evaluation, impact assessment, social justice, and community-based research. The program has strengths in the following specialty areas: social inequality, health and well-being, and community, food, and the environment.

- Master of Arts in Sociology (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/graduate-and-professional/college-departments/humanities-social-sciences/sociology/sociology-ma/>)
- Graduate Certificate in Sociology (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/graduate-and-professional/college-departments/humanities-social-sciences/sociology/sociology-certificate/>)

SOCI 5099. Graduate Readings in Sociology. 1-3 Hours.

Students pursue an independent study of subjects not covered in the regular graduate curricula. Topics may cover special subject matter related to a thesis. Variable Credit (1-3). Course Equivalents: SOCI 5399

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

SOCI 5100. Proseminar in Sociology. 1 Hour.

Students prepare for graduate studies in sociology and are provided with the tools and resources to be successful graduate students.

Prerequisite: Graduate Standing.

SOCI 5310. Seminar In Sociological Theory. 3 Hours.

Students study the most significant 19th and 20th century developments in sociology with emphasis placed on the relevance of classic sociological theory in the formation and development of contemporary sociological theory. Students explore the characteristics and origins of many major sociological schools of thought (e.g., Neo-Marxism, Critical Theory, Interactionism, Functionalism and Postmodernism) and accounts of these paradigms are presented together with their theoretical ramifications.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

SOCI 5312. Seminar in Sociological Research. 3 Hours.

Students examine the advanced study of logic, principles, and procedures involving techniques of design data collection and organization, analyses and interpretation for qualitative and quantitative sociological research.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

SOCI 5313. Qualitative Methods. 3 Hours.

Students study a wide range of qualitative sociological methods (e.g., in-depth interviews, participant observation, and content analyses) and gain many practical skills such as collecting and analyzing data and writing qualitative research.

SOCI 5314. Social Statistics. 3 Hours.

Students develop mastery of various statistical techniques used to analyze survey data (e.g. descriptive and inferential statistics, cross tabulation, ANOVA, correlation and regression). Students learn the logic, interpretation, and assumptions of each statistical model with an additional emphasis on the application of these techniques. Course Equivalents: SOCI 5414

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

SOCI 5319. Sociology of Entrepreneurship. 3 Hours.

Students examine the role of the entrepreneur in modern society and ways modern society influences entrepreneurship in communities, regions, and nations. Topics may include entrepreneurial risk, opportunity, innovation, and social entrepreneurship, and students will critically examine how entrepreneurial behavior changes across social boundaries like race, gender, and culture.

Prerequisite: Graduate Standing.

SOCI 5320. Sociology of Community. 3 Hours.

Students study the organization, structures, groups and interaction pertaining to communities. Students examine social forces within communities, patterns of change and the relationship with society and are introduced to alternative theoretical perspectives for analyzing community as well as views on the current conditions and future perspectives of communities in the United States and in other regions of the world.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

SOCI 5321. Cultural Sociology. 3 Hours.

Students examine culture from the sociological perspective and consider both classic and modern theories of culture. Students also review major sociological methods of cultural analysis, the application of theories, and the analysis of socio-cultural phenomena.

SOCI 5322. Seminar In Medical Sociology. 3 Hours.

This course provides graduate students with the conceptual and substantive knowledge of the field of medical sociology. The course focuses on salient sociological issues in health and medicine, such as the social construction of health and illness, social inequalities in health and health care, medicalization, the health profession, the health care system, and bioethics. Special attention is paid to the roles of social, cultural, and institutional factors in understanding health and health care issues in the United States and in other countries.

Prerequisite: Graduate Standing.

SOCI 5324. Seminar in Social Change and Development. 3 Hours.

Students examine a variety of theories of development that explain how and why inequality between and within nations is produced and reproduced. Students learn to think critically about the impacts of the development and globalization process, as well as neoliberalization and free trade, on people and environments throughout the world. Students explore strategies that may contribute to the construction of a world that is more equitable, socially just, and environmentally sustainable than the current one.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

SOCI 5325. Seminar in Food and Society. 3 Hours.

Students examine the production, distribution, and consumption of food from a sociological perspective with a particular focus on the analysis of the contemporary food systems. Students learn to critically analyze issues surrounding food and society through a sociological lens.

SOCI 5331. Sociology of The Family. 3 Hours.

Students explore the family as a social institution and examine functional, critical, and interactionist approaches to the family. Topics may include historical shifts in the institution and interpersonal dynamics within families.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

SOCI 5333. Sociology of Religion. 3 Hours.

Students examine how religion operates in non-industrial and industrial societies using a cross-cultural perspective. Topics may include religious beliefs, religious rituals, group religious experience, and the religious community.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

SOCI 5337. Gender and Society. 3 Hours.

Students consider the social construction of gender and obtain a framework to critically examine how it operates in society. Students examine how gender is linked with inequality in the United States.

SOCI 5338. Sociology of Disasters. 3 Hours.

Students apply sociological analyses to the investigation of disasters and examine disasters in terms of their origins and social impacts. The course may also explore the social dynamics that create risk of, and vulnerability to, disasters.

SOCI 5350. The Community Practitioner. 3 Hours.

Students examine the role of a community development practitioner and investigate theories and techniques used in the field to build community and create long-lasting social and institutional change. Students evaluate "best practices" and their impact on community policy.

Prerequisite: SOCI 5320.

SOCI 5351. Seminar in Environmental Sociology. 3 Hours.

Students gain a thorough background in the major theoretical perspectives regarding environmental sociology, which enables them to view environmental issues from alternative positions and to formulate possible solutions to contemporary environmental problems. Additional topics may include the social construction of the environment and on environmental problems and solutions.

SOCI 5353. Seminar in Race And Ethnic Studies. 3 Hours.

Students obtain an in-depth examination and critique of important monographs and journal literature dealing with the social life of American minorities. Topics may consider, ideologies, inequality, structural forces and changes characteristic of the social life of comparative minority groups. Students identify sociological propositions reflected in the discerned patterns of interaction in selected institutions in contemporary American society.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

SOCI 5355. Seminar in Social Inequality. 3 Hours.

Students examine contemporary class, status and power hierarchies using both contemporary and classical social theory of inequality. Students engage with empirical research pertaining to placement in these hierarchies on the basis of birth-achieved statuses such as sex, race, and class origin.

SOCI 5376. Applied Research Methods. 3 Hours.

Students apply the methodological concepts that were learned in SOCI 5312 to propose empirical analyses of social problems. Specific topics may consider sample selection and unit of analysis, types of data collection, and analytical techniques.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

SOCI 5378. Techniques of Research Proposal Writing in Social Sciences. 3 Hours.

Students obtain a critical understanding of the principal technical and theoretical skills necessary for the development of research projects in the social sciences and research grant writing. Students investigate the primary assumptions of qualitative and quantitative research and consider their scopes and limits. Topics may include epistemological characteristics of major paradigms in the social sciences, analytical techniques necessary for the preparation of research proposals, identification of research questions, development of justifications, and the development of analytic designs.

SOCI 5380. Social Impact Assessment and Program Evaluation. 3 Hours.

Students gain an overview of the field of social impact assessment and program evaluation and are exposed to hands-on experience through a practical case study. Specific topics may include basic knowledge, as well as technical skills, related to conducting a social impact assessment and program evaluation.

SOCI 5384. Seminar in Economy and Society. 3 Hours.

Students examine the effects of economic change on the organization of society and social relations. Topics may include the consequences of globalization and neoliberalization.

Prerequisite: SOCI 5310.

SOCI 5386. The Sociology of Aging. 3 Hours.

Students explore sociological theories of aging from historical, demographic, comparative, social psychological and structural perspectives. Students also examine contemporary social problems facing older adults. Additional topics may consider similarities and differences across, gender, race/ethnicity, and social class using the life course perspective.

SOCI 6098. Thesis Practicum. 1-3 Hours.

Students successfully develop a Thesis Prospectus and select a thesis committee. Variable Credit (1-3). Course Equivalents: SOCI 6398 .

SOCI 6099. Thesis. 1-3 Hours.

Students complete and successfully defend their Thesis. The student must be enrolled in SOCI 6099 during the semester in which the master's degree is to be completed. Variable Credit (1-3). Course Equivalents: SOCI 6399 .

SOCI 6360. Seminar In Sociology. 3 Hours.

Students examine a substantive area and/or sociologically significant issue not covered in other departmental offerings. Topics may be influenced by current innovations in the field or significant world events. May be repeated.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Director/Chair: **James Bartlett Stykes**

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